



FISHERIES ADVISORY COUNCIL - A group of dedicated citizens from all regions of the state working together for fish and fishing in Connecticut.

March 4, 2010

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Testimony of Dr. Vincent P. Ringrose, Chairman, FISHERIES ADVISORY COUNCIL.

Re: *RAISED BILL* SB207

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and members of the Environmental Committee:

I wish to testify on the behalf of the Fisheries Advisory Council of the DEP concerning proposed SB207.

The FAC is an umbrella organization representing 40 organizations and affiliates throughout the State that advises the DEP on all matters pertaining to fisheries conservation and management, both in fresh and marine waters.

Fishermen in the State, like all sportsmen, have been willing participants in moderate raises in license fees every few years or so to cover cost increases. However, in this case we believe that it is essential that the recent fee increases be rolled back to a reasonable level. Without the rollbacks in SB207, the doubling of license fees will cause two potentially devastating changes in sportfishing in this State.

First, there will be a drop-off of participants. This impact will be most pronounced among young anglers aged 16-21. These anglers are likely to stop fishing, thereby adversely affecting the long-term viability of the sport of fishing and the license revenue stream to the State of Connecticut. Second, there will be a severe financial impact on businesses which sell fishing tackle, bait tackle and fishing services. In both cases, loss of income to the State over the long-term will be noticeable.

The new Marine license had wisely been kept at ten dollars to be consistent with neighboring states. The raise to thirty dollars in SB207 is totally out of line. In fact, a \$30 license will result in out-of-state anglers being able to fish Connecticut's marine waters for considerably less than our own state residents.

In summary, the FAC urges you to roll back the doubled fees to moderate increases, and to keep the Marine license at ten dollars.

We will be happy to provide any assistance we can to further this goal in conjunction with your efforts.

Thank you for listening to this testimony.